



Department of Justice

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Southern District of Indiana**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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INDIANAPOLIS WOMAN CHARGED IN ARSON FOR PROFIT SCHEME

PRESS RELEASE

Timothy M. Morrison, Acting United States Attorney for the Southern District of Indiana, announced that VANESSA ALLEN HATCHER, 48, Indianapolis, Indiana, was indicted by a federal grand jury sitting in Indianapolis for Using Fire To Commit Mail Fraud and Conspiracy To Use Fire To Commit Mail Fraud, following an investigation by the Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco Firearms and Explosives and the Muncie Police Department.

The indictment alleges in the first count that VANESSA ALLEN HATCHER engaged in a conspiracy and scheme to use fire to defraud insurance companies by fraudulently causing insurance companies to pay claims for fire damage on residences that conspirators caused to be damaged by arson. The indictment alleges that ALLEN HATCHER and others would buy low priced residences, in the Muncie and Indianapolis, Indiana area. They would obtain fire insurance on the property and then arrange to set the property on fire in a manner that would make the fire appear to be accidental. They would then seek to collect proceeds from the insurance companies as fire damage, and further, would inflate and falsify their claims to the insurance company with the aid of an insurance adjuster. The fraud on the insurance companies was furthered through use of the mails, thus making it a fire to commit mail fraud. The indictment lists five residences that were the subject of arson as part of the conspiracy. The indictment further alleges four additional counts against HATCHER ALLEN for using fire to commit mail fraud by setting on fire four separately identified properties, three in Muncie and one in Indianapolis, for the purpose of defrauding insurance companies.

According to Assistant U. S. Attorney Winfield D. Ong, who is prosecuting the case for the government, ALLEN HATCHER faces a maximum possible prison sentence of 60 years and a maximum possible fine of \$250,000. An initial hearing will be scheduled for before a U.S. Magistrate Judge in Indianapolis, Indiana.

The indictment is an allegation only, and the defendant is presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty at trial or by guilty plea.

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